



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department Of Agriculture Rural Development
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USDA Rural Development Provides Grants Promoting Energy Efficiency and Value-Added Endeavors

Norfolk, Neb. November 21, 2005-USDA Rural Development's Scot Blehm, state director for Nebraska, presented eight recipients with symbolic funding checks today. The checks, totaling over \$389,000, represent USDA's commitment to conserving energy and increasing economic opportunities through the development of new products and markets for agriculturally based products.

"The energy and value-added grants being recognized today will help ensure the profitability and sustainability of these rural producers and businesses," stated Blehm. "With the dollars saved on energy and the money being kept at home with the producers from value-added efforts, Nebraska's rural economy will gain strength, making it possible for more rural communities to thrive."

Check recipients include:

- JD Printing and Publishing Company of Neligh will utilize \$9,440 to install higher energy efficient insulation, heating, lighting, doors and windows saving 164 million British thermal units (btus) of energy or 59 percent over previous use.
- Pizza Hut of West Point, Inc. was awarded \$4,000 to replace their current HVAC system with a new energy efficiency system. Thirty percent or 81,0999 kilowatt-hours of energy will be saved, equating to approximately a yearly energy savings of \$4,300.
- Tom Svoboda dba D.C. Auto Parts of David City received \$3,470 to replace old heating/cooling equipment, window and doors of the business facility. Improvements will save 115,000,000 btus of energy reducing energy consumption by over 50 percent and energy costs by 57 percent.
- Victor Bohuslavsky of rural Brainard will use \$5,420 to convert his old irrigation power units to new highly efficient diesel units. The new units will save 591 million btus of energy, reduce consumption by 36 percent and return the cost of investment in 2.7 years.
- CC Ag, LLC of Wisner received \$150,000 to develop a market for compost to use as plant nutrients and a soil amendment.
- Jisa Farmstead Cheese, LLC of Brainard was awarded \$150,000 for a working capital grant to market its Hispanic specialty cheeses in Hispanic grocery stores of central and eastern Nebraska and to conventional grocers within the state. Funds will assist in hiring a marketing manager and production manager, implementing the marketing plan, and funding marketing costs such as promotional materials and bilingual labels.

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-2-

- Rutledge Apiaries, Inc. of Plainview received \$18,500 to complete a feasibility study, along with marketing & business plans for producing and marketing a honey spread known as honey 'butter'. Funds will also help defer expenses related to label development, Securities and Exchange Commission and other financial documents.
- Westphalia Vineyards of Bow Valley will use \$48,500 to complete a feasibility study and marketing & business plans for a new winery of an established producer-owned vineyard. Assistance will be provided by the University of Lincoln Food Processing Center and other consulting firms in this endeavor.

Statewide, \$418,348 in energy grants were awarded in Fiscal Year 2005 assisting in 36 energy efficiency improvements projects and 1 renewable energy. Value-added grants totaling \$1,113,540 assisted 16 producers in value-added ventures. The 2002 Farm Bill made available monies for both energy and value-added projects. Since the beginning of these programs, Nebraska has received nearly \$778,000 for 57 energy projects and over \$7.7 million assisting in 54 value-added ventures.

Energy grants are awarded to farmers, ranchers, and for-profit small rural businesses for renewable energy systems such as wind, solar, biomass, biogas, or geothermal sources or hydrogen derived from biomass or water using wind, solar, or geothermal energy sources; and for energy efficiency improvement projects such as improvements to HVAC systems, insulation, refrigeration, lighting, pumping systems, air systems, motor systems, irrigation systems, etc.

Value-added grants help producers to expand the customer base for their commodities through a value-added activity that allows producers to retain a greater profit in the marketplace.

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